AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims

1.   (previously presented) A method for identifying clinical trial candidates, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving at a data exchange service from a patient clinical data source, patient data including identities of patients;

replacing the identities of the patients in the patient data with secure patient codes;

forwarding the patient data with secure patient codes, from the data exchange service to a clinical trial candidate identification service;

receiving at the data exchange service from the clinical trial candidate identification service a clinical trial candidate proposal including a secure patient code corresponding to a proposed clinical trial candidate for a clinical trial;

determining an identity of the proposed clinical trial candidate from the secure patient code;

forwarding the identity of the proposed clinical trial candidate from the data exchange service to a candidate contact; and

forwarding from the clinical trial candidate identification service to the candidate contact, descriptive information about the clinical trial;

wherein the clinical data source is a database containing transactions between health care providers and payers.

2.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the candidate contact is a health care provider of the candidate.

3.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the candidate contact is the proposed clinical trial candidate.

4-5   (canceled)

6.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of extracting patient medical information from the patient data received from a patient clinical data source.

7.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of reformatting the patient data received from a patient clinical data source.

8.   (canceled)

9.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the clinical data source is a hospital network.

10.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving from the candidate contact a status of the clinical trial candidate proposal; and

forwarding the status to the clinical trial candidate identification service.

11.   (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the status includes the identity of the proposed candidate, and the method further comprises the step of replacing the

identity of the proposed candidate with a secure patient code before forwarding the status to the clinical trial candidate identification service.

12-23 (canceled)

24.   (previously presented) A system for identifying clinical trial candidates, comprising:

a data exchange service for receiving patient records from a patient clinical data source and replacing identities of patients in each patient record with a secure patient code;

a clinical trial candidate identification service for receiving the patient records with secure patient codes from the data exchange service, identifying a patient record as a clinical trial candidate for a clinical trial, forwarding the secure patient code of the identified patient record to the data exchange service, and forwarding information about the clinical trial to a candidate contact;

the data exchange service being further for determining an identity of a patient from the secure patient code of the identified patient record, and forwarding the identity of the patient to the candidate contact;

wherein the clinical data source is a database containing transactions between health care providers and payers.

25.   (previously presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the clinical trial candidate identification service forwards a secure patient code of the identified patient record to the data exchange service, and the data exchange service determines the identity of the patient and forwards the identity to the candidate contact for contacting the patient.

26.   (previously presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the data exchange service receives a status of the clinical trial candidate proposal, replaces an identity of the proposed candidate with a secure patient code; and forwards the status to the clinical trial candidate identification service.

27.   (original) The system of claim 24, wherein the clinical trial candidate identification service is further for receiving candidate selection criteria for a clinical trial, and the clinical trial candidate identification service identifies a patient record based on the candidate selection criteria.

28-29 (canceled)

30.   (original) The system of claim 24, wherein the data exchange service is further for extracting patient medical information from the patient data received from a patient clinical data source.

31.   (original) The system of claim 24, wherein the data exchange service is further for reformatting the patient data received from a patient clinical data source.

32.   (canceled)

33.   (original) The system of claim 24, wherein the clinical data source is a hospital network.

34.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of replacing the identities of the patients in the patient data with secure patient codes further comprises:

performing a one-way hash.

35.   (currently amended) The system of claim 24, wherein the data exchange service performs a one-way hash on the identities of the patients to create ~~encrypted versions of the patient identities~~ secure patient codes.

36.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of replacing the identities of the patients in the patient data with secure patient codes comprises encrypting the identities to create secure patient codes, and the step of determining an identity of the proposed clinical trial candidate comprises decrypting the secure patient code corresponding to the proposed clinical trial candidate.

37.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of replacing the identities of the patients in the patient data with secure patient codes comprises replacing the identities with unique codes and maintaining a table correlating the identities with the unique codes, and the step of determining an identity of the proposed clinical trial candidate comprises looking up in the table an identity of a patient corresponding to the secure patient code.